

## A CURRENT PORTRAIT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN ACEH

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### ABSTRACT

*There have been many studies on Islamic education in Aceh, especially among traditional institutions. However, the new coming of ustādh from Java has led to social dynamics in the province. This paper aims to examine the contemporary of Islamic authority in education in Aceh, Indonesia. It will focus with two social concepts and their role in society. It is based from fieldwork in Aceh in several areas. It is argued that there is a change of Islamic authority in the society in which the ustādh plays more important role in education than teungkue. Meanwhile, the teungkus are more interested in political arena.*

**Keywords:** *Aceh; Islamic education; Teungku; Ustādh; Terrorist*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the socio-cultural context of Islamic education in Aceh. It will focus on the changes in religious authority in the Acehnese community, that is, from the figure of the *teungku* to the *ustādh*. It has been widely argued that authority in Islamic education in Aceh is held by traditional Islamic religious leaders called *teungku*. They play important roles not only in the *dayah* (Islamic boarding school), or religious schools, in the reproduction of ‘*ulamā*, but also as guardians of Acehnese society.

However, in the everyday life of Islam in Aceh, some *teungku* also play major roles in society and politics rather than just in Islamic education. *Ustādh*, on the other hand, means *guru* (teacher). They play important roles not only in Islamic boarding schools (*pondok modern*), but also as religious preachers (*juru dakwah*). Both *teungku* and *ustādh* are commonly used terms in Aceh.

However, in the last two decades, the name *ustādh* became more accepted by the Acehnese people. It is said that “the modern *dayah* was first established in 1983, the *Dayah* of ‘Ulumul Qur’an – Bustanul ‘Ulum,’ in

Langsa, East Aceh.”<sup>1</sup> The student who is graduated from this *pesantren* at the level of junior high school or *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (junior high school) is called *santri*, while the *santri* in the *dayah* we preferred to call our teachers *ustādh*, not *teungku*. Many of them had graduated from *pesantren* in Java. In contrast, during the conflict in Aceh (1976-2005) the *teungku* who formerly concerned themselves exclusively with religious matters, were being used by members of GAM (Free Achenese Movement), especially at the district (*Panglima Wilayah*) and sub-district levels (*Panglima Sagoe*).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is basically a fieldwork study conducted in several *pesantrens* in different areas in Aceh. Therefore, the data used in this study are that of obtained from observation and interviews. In addition, to support those data, this study also benefit from library studies relevant to the issue under discussion. As for the method, this paper utilizes a socio-anthropological approach. That is to say that this paper does not merely portray Islamic educational system in theoretical manner. Rather, it also observes the socio-cultural background of situation leading to changing view of teacher in Muslim society. In other words, this study attempts at describing social perception of *ustādh*, teacher, which changes from one period to another.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Local ‘Ulamā’: *Teungku*

In Aceh, ‘*ulamā*’ have played a major role since the coming of Islam until its joining with the Republic of Indonesia at independence.<sup>2</sup> During the period of the Islamic kingdom they were employed as special advisors to the Kings and Queens.<sup>3</sup> In the era of the wars with the Dutch they were seen as heroes who employed the ideology of *jihād* against the Dutch.<sup>4</sup> Historically,

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Abdurrahman, “The Curriculum of Islamic Studies in Traditional and Modern Dayah in Aceh: A Comparative Study,” *Al-Jami’ah*, 30 (2001): 78.

<sup>2</sup> Alfian, “The ‘Ulamā in Acehnese Society,” *Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique, and Yasmin Hussain (Singapore: ISEAS, 1985); M. Hasbi Amiruddin, ‘*Ulamā Dayah: Pengawal Agama Masyarakat Aceh*, trans. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad (Lhokseumawe: Nadya Foundation, 2003); M. Hasbi Amiruddin, *Perjuangan ‘Ulamā Aceh Di Tengah Konflik* (Yogyakarta: CENINNETS Press, 2004); Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “Menatap Masa Depan Dayah Dalam Era Transformasi Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Gerakan Keagamaan” (paper presented at the Seminar Schari: Mendesign Dayah 2050 (Mencari Format Dayah yang Tahan Zaman), Banda Aceh, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Denys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh Zaman Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636)*, trans. Winarsih Arifin (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2007); Azyumardi Azra, “Education, Law, Mysticism: Constructing Sosial Realities,” *Islamic Civilization in the Malay World*, ed. Mohd. Thaib Osman (Kuala Lumpur and Istanbul: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2000); Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan ‘Ulamā Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Melacak Akar Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Ibrahim Alfian, “Aceh and the Holy War (*Prang Sabil*),” *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006); Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang Di Jalan Allah* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1987); Ibrahim Alfian, *Wajah Aceh Dalam Lintasan Sejarah* (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1999).

rebellion against Indonesian government after independence was run by the *‘ulamā*, especially following the declaration of *Darul Islām* in the 1950s. All of these actions were not centralized from the palace of the Islamic Kingdom, but from the many *dayahs* in Aceh.<sup>5</sup> According to Yusny Saby, “Those *‘ulamā*” who stand out for their lasting contributions in shaping the religious and cultural values of the Acehnese society are [...] – the “*‘ulamā*” of Pasai; of Aceh Darussalam; of the *Prang Sabil* (*Jihad* Struggle); and the reformist “*‘ulamā*” of PUSA (All Aceh “*‘ulamā*” Association).”<sup>6</sup>

In Aceh, apart from the term *teungku*, the *‘ulamā* is also referred to by the terms *Abū* and *Abon*. There is a hierarchy in this system. The highest *‘ulamā* is called the *Abū* (father) and is associated with that village, for example, *Abu Tanoh Mirah*, *Abu Awe Geutah*, *Abu Tanoh Abe*, etc. In this context, the name is related to the land where they control the religious aspects of society.<sup>7</sup> It can be added that the Acehnese also call *Abu* the *Teungku Chik*, who is normally the head of *dayah*. His job is “deciding the curriculum and methodology to be used in the establishment”<sup>8</sup> of the *dayah*. Generally speaking, the education system of the *dayah* is the same as those Islamic schools known as *pesantren* in Java,<sup>9</sup> *Surau* in Padang,<sup>10</sup> and *Pondok* in Malaysia,<sup>11</sup> and *Ponoh* in Southern Thailand.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the role of the *Teungku Chik* is similar to the position of the *Kiai* in *pesantren*.<sup>13</sup>

The role of the *Abu Chik* or *Teungku Chik* is not restricted to the *dayah*, but he is also regarded as a spiritual leader for the society. For

<sup>5</sup> A. Hasmy, ed., *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia (Kumpulan Prasaran Pada Seminar Di Aceh)* (Bandung: Al-Maarif, 1993); Rasul Hamidy, Fachruddin Hasballan, and Rusmin Tumanggor, “Kharisma ‘Ulamā dalam Persepsi Masyarakat Aceh,” in *Agama dan Perubahan Sosial* (Banda Aceh: Lembaga Research dan Survey, IAIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, 1981/1982).

<sup>6</sup> Yusny Saby, “The Role of the ‘Ulamā in Combating Colonial Experience: The Case Fo Aceh, Sumatra,” *Islamic Studies in Asean: Presentation of an International Seminar*, ed. Isma-ae Aleec, et. al. (Pattani: College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University, 2000), 395.

<sup>7</sup> Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi* (Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2012); idem, “Jejak Spirit Aceh,” *‘Ulamā dan Politik: Menyongsong Aceh Baru*, ed. Bustami Abubakar (Banda Aceh: Lembaga Studi Masyarakat Aceh dan STAIN Malikussaleh, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Abdurrahman, “The Curriculum of Islamic Studies in Traditional and Modern Dayahs in Aceh: A Comparative Study,” 64. On the role of *Teungku Chik* see also Muhammad Abdurrahman, “Proses Akulturasi Nilai Persaudaraan Islam Di Dua Dayah Terpilih Di Aceh” (Ph.D. Diss, University Putra Malaysia, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, and Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999); Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, 1994); Abdurrahman Mas ud, *Dari Haramain ke Nusantara: Jejak Intelektual Arsitek Pesantren* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2006); M. Dawam Rahardjo, “The Kyai, the Pesantren and the Village: A Preliminary Sketch,” *Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique, and Yasmin Hussain (Singapore: ISEAS, 1985), 240-6.

<sup>10</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Surau Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Jakarta: Logos, 2003); Dina Afrianty, “Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau,” in *Mencetak Muslim Modern: Peta Pendidikan Islam Indonesia*, ed. Jajat Burhanuddin and Dina Afrianty (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> William R. Roff, “*Pondoks, Madrasahs* and the Production of *‘ulamā* in Malaysia,” *Studia Islamika*, 11: 1 (2004): 1-22.

<sup>12</sup> Utai Dulyakasem and Lertchai Sirichai, eds., *Knowledge and Conflict Resolution: The Crisis of the Border Region of Southern Thailand* (Nakhon Si Thammarat: School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University, The Asia Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren*; Ronald Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: P3M, 1987); Rahardjo, “The Kyai, the Pesantren and the Village.”

example, he would frequently be invited to government ceremonies, or visited by new Military Commanders (*Panglima*) to get their blessing as part of the *silaturrahmi*. Some *Abu Chik* are also involved in the political arena, especially in the most recent local elections in 2009. They established a party called PDA (*Partai Daulah Aceh*). However, the position of the *Teungku Chik* is more similar to that of the spiritual leader in the *Shi'ite* sect.<sup>14</sup> During the conflict, they played a role as mediators between the Indonesian military and GAM. In addition, in one *dayah* in Aceh Besar one *Abu* guaranteed the safety of some GAM members who had surrendered to the government.

Some *Abu Chik* are also called *Shaykh*.<sup>15</sup> In some *dayahs*, especially in South Aceh, *suluk* (spiritual Islamic mysticism) is held during Ramadhan. If there is no *Shaykh* or *tarekat* in such *dayah* some senior *santris* will perform a *khalwad* (retreat), a 45-day meditation near some great '*ulamā*'s tomb<sup>16</sup> or in very dark room near the *dayah*. There is another spiritual retreat in Aceh which is called *Salek Buta*, a form of spiritual meditation where "there is no teacher" during a "meeting" with Allāh.<sup>17</sup> Some believe that this is a part of the teaching of *wahdat al-wujūd* (mystical union) which originally came from Ibn 'Arabī.<sup>18</sup>

The *teungku* who works under the *Abu Chik* or *Teungku Chik* is known as the *Teungku Bale*. Academically, this group of *teungku* has a role that is similar to that of the *ustādh* in '*dayah modern*.' This level is almost same as Senior High School. The *santri* study from *Teungku Bale* in the small-hall of the *dayah*. The *Teungku Bale* also represents the *Abu Chik* or *Teungku Chik* in some community ceremonies. They act as leaders of prayers in the *dayah*, giving the *khutbah* (preaching), and reciting *du'a* (prayer) in some *kenduris* or *slametan*.<sup>19</sup> Some chosen *Teungku Bale* marry with the daughters of the *Abu Chik*. This is seen as a signal that this *Teungku* will become a leader of the *dayah* if the *Teungku Chik* passes away. Or, the *Teungku Bale* is asked to establish his own *dayah* or to stay at the *dayah* for the rest of his life. The networks of the *Teungku Bale* are a

<sup>14</sup> Abulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-Sulṭān al-'Ādil) in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imami Jurisprudence* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>15</sup> On *tarekat* in Indonesia, see Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (*Tarekat*) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika*, 1: 1 (1994); Martin van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," *Die Welt des Islams*, 38: 1 (1998); Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Nasyabandiah Di Indonesia* (Bandung Mizan, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> For a description of visiting saints' graves, see Henri Chambert-Loir and Claude Guillot, eds., *Ziarah dan Wali di Dunia Islam* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Misri A. Muchsin, "Salik Buta Aliran Tasawuf Aceh Abad XX," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 42: 1 (2004):183.

<sup>18</sup> On this, see William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī: Heir to the Prophets*, ed. Patricia Crone, Makers of the Muslim World (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007); Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Falsafat al-Ta'wīl (Dirāsah fī Ta'wīl al-Qurān 'inda Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī)* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1996); Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970).

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Beatty, *Variasi Agama di Jawa: Suatu Pendekatan Anthropologi*, trans. Achmad Fedyani Saifuddin (Jakarta: Murai Kencana, 2001); Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

new generation of leadership in *dayah*. For example, there is an intellectual network of *Dayah Mudi Mesra* in Lamno (Aceh Jaya), *Dayah Mesjid Raya* in Samalanga (Aceh Jeumpa), and *Dayah Awe Geutah* (Aceh Jeumpa).

Next to the *Teungku Bale* is the *Teungku Rangkang*. The *rangkang* level is similar to the level of junior high school. The group of *Teungku Rangkang* is selected from the *santris* who act as “assistants” to the *Teungku Bale*. They will study Islam from the *Teungku Rangkang* or even the *Teungku Chik* once a week. In this category, the *santri* studies the *Kitab Kuning* (“Yellow Books”) written in the *Jawi* script. In fact, this group does not have any authority in *dayah*, except as “assistants” to the *Teungku Bale*. However, some *Teungku Rangkang* will achieve the position of *Teungku Bale* due to their progress and loyalty to the system.

Next is the *teungku meunasah*. His tasks are not in the *dayah*, but in the *gampong* (village). The *meunasah* is a place where children study Islām and which is also used as a place for prayers. At this level children “are taught how to read and write Arabic, to recite al-Quran, to perform *ṣalāt* (prayer), *akhlāk* (morals), Islamic history, pillars of faith and to sing religious songs every Thursday night.”<sup>20</sup> However, the job of the *teungku meunasah* is not only in teaching Islam, but he also plays a major role as a *shaykh* for the villagers. It is a must for the *teungku meunasah* to make himself available for the people’s needs in religious affairs. He acts as a “problem solver” with the head of the village to solve problems in society, for example personal conflicts, religious festivals, wedding parties, and welcoming guests. The *Teungku meunasah* will work together with the *geusyik* (chief of village). It is argued that the *teungku meunasah* and *geusyik* are together the guardians of the village. However, the selection of the *teungku meunasah* is due to the quality of his Islamic knowledge and charisma. The head of the village is chosen through the system of elections.

Villages where there is not a single man who has studied at a *dayah* will face many internal problems. That is why some elders will agree to let their girls be married to men from a *dayah*, with the aim that he could stay at the *gampong* to become a *teungku meunasah*. This practice can no longer be found in the urban areas in Aceh. In some traditional *gampongs*, parents prefer to send their children to *dayah*. One parent informed me that he would not hesitate about the career of their children, since he believed that the problem was under the direction of Allāh.

Besides the three *teungkus*, there are also other *teungkus* who are well-known outside the *dayah*. For example, Acehnese who lives outside Aceh may be called *Teungku Aceh*. This nickname means the person can be a local *shaykh*. He might be offered to be an *imām* (leader) during prayers, as it is believed that every Acehnese can recite the al-Quran. We have heard

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<sup>20</sup>Abdurrahman, “The Curriculum of Islamic Studies,” 67.

the term *teungku Aceh* used in Java. During the conflict, when some Acehnese moved out of Aceh and became part of a “ganja mafia,” some people referred to them as *Teungku Aceh*. The name *teungku* has also been used for members of GAM who had some prominent position in the movement.<sup>21</sup> This group of *teungku*, however, owes their position not to Islamic religious knowledge, but to their ideology. For example, the grandfather of the leader of GAM, Hasan di Tiro, was called *Teungku Chik di Tiro* where his real name is Mohd. Saman. While the charismatic leader of DI/TII was formally known as Daud Beureueh, the common people referred to him as *Abu Beureueh*.<sup>22</sup> The former head of GAM, Dr. Hasan di Tiro, was called *Dr. Teungku Hasan di Tiro*, not *Abu Di Tiro* or *Teungku Chik Hasan di Tiro*. Thus, some people believe that the name *teungku* signifies a more traditional title in Aceh, not a religious title. For example, the former *Panglimas* of GAM are called *teungku*, such as *Teungku Abdullah Syafi’i* (the former Chief Military of GAM) and *Teungku Muzakir Manaf*.

### B. The Outsider ‘*Ulamā: Ustādh*

This section refers to some of informal interviews and observations during the fieldwork in Aceh.<sup>23</sup> In the field, we were able to conduct an “I witness” study of the *pesantren* system run by the *Jamā’ah Tabligh* (JT).<sup>24</sup> Here, many of the *ustadhs* were from Java, final year *santri* at a *pesantren* in Central Java. They were sent by their *kiai*<sup>25</sup> to Aceh to teach Islamic Studies at the *pesantren* of the JT. Most of these *ustadhs* were only in their 20s. Originally, the *santris* were from Aceh. However, there were also some *santris* from outside Aceh, including from Makassar.

The *ustadhs* shared with me their experiences when they arrived in Aceh. At the beginning, many of them were rejected as *santris* because they were Javanese. After one or two years, some *ustadhs* went back to Java to continue their studies in order to achieve the title of ‘*ulamā*. They said that one of the requirements to achieve the title was to read the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-*

<sup>21</sup> See also Rodd McGibbon, “Local Leadership and the Aceh Conflict,” *Verandah of Violence: The Background of the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: NUS, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> On him, see Hasanuddin Yusuf Adan, *Teungku Muhammad Dawud Beureu-Eh: ‘Ulamā, Pemimpin dan Tokoh Pembaharuan* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “The History of *Jama’ah Tabligh* in Southeast Asia: The Role of Islamic Sufism in Islamic Revival,” *Al-Jami’ah*, 46: 2 (2008); idem, “From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: A Study of *Jama’ah Tabligh* in Sri Petaling (Malaysia) and Cot Goh (Indonesia)” (Ph.D. Thesis, La Trobe University 2009).

<sup>24</sup> On *Jama’ah Tabligh*, see generally Muhammad Khalid Masud, ed. *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighī Jamā’at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighī Jamā’at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002); Yoginder Sikand, “The Reformist Sufism of the *Tablighī Jamā’at*: The Case of the Meos of Mewat, India,” *Sufism and the ‘Modern’ in Islam*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howel (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007). On JT in Indonesia, see Abdul Aziz, “The Jamaah Tabligh Movement in Indonesia: Peaceful Fundamentalist,” *Studia Islamika*, 11: 3 (2004).

<sup>25</sup> On Kyai see Rahardjo, “The Kyai, the Pesantren and the Village.”

*Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in front of the *kiai*. However, some of them also married with local women or *mastūrāt* (female *karkun*). In fact, this network and their education system has developed into a new religious identity in Aceh.

There is also another image of *ustādh* in the *pesantren*. This *ustādh* was an Achenese who had graduated from a *pondok* in Yala. He could speak Thai. He said that many *Tablighists* who had returned from Yala should stay in the *markaz* (headquarter) to teach *santri* how to memorize the al-Quran. This *ustādh* married the daughter of the *Teungku Imuem* (the head of *imām* for daily prayers) of this mosque. He was given a land of paddy-field by his parents-in-law for his daily needs. Beside this, the *ustādh* also visited some *pesantrens* in Banda Aceh to teach students how to memorize the al-Quran.

Another picture of Javanese *ustādh* is found in a *pesantren* in a mosque in North Aceh. The *ustādhs* there were also very young. They had come to Aceh not through Tablighist connections. Many of them were sent from Java through the ‘*Sunnah Connection*’ after the Tsunami in Aceh in 2004. What we mean by the ‘*Sunnah Connection*’ is an Islamic community in North Aceh who declared themselves not to be affiliated with any Islamic *mazhab* (school of thought). This group tends to be the same as the Muhammadiyah movement.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the group is not part of the Muhammadiyah network at all. The *ustādhs* came from Java in 2005 to teach memorizing the al-Quran. The ‘*Sunnah Connection*’ provided them with hospitality at the mosque. They are paid on a voluntary basis by the group. The group asked their children to study the al-Quran at the mosque. One of their dreams is to send their children to higher education that focuses on memorizing the al-Quran.

Besides their duties as teachers, many of *ustādhs* also acted as *imams* for daily prayers. The members of the local community liked them very much due to their voices when they recited the al-Quran during the prayer. After the Tsunami in 2004, the *teungku imuem* in this mosque was an Acehnese. But recently, he preferred to transfer his authority as *imām* to *ustādh*. In fact, before the Tsunami, there was a circle for Islamic studies in the community which was also given by an Acehnese *ustādh*. They will invite a *ustādh* from another village who is likely to be not affiliated with any *madzhab*. Thus, the *ustādhs* are teachers at junior or senior high schools in North Aceh. They may not invite any of *Teungku* from the *dayah*. Every Saturday night, the community holds religious studies after the ‘*Ishā*’

<sup>26</sup> On the Muhammadiyah, see generally, Howard M. Federspiel, “The Muhammadiyah: A Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia,” *Indonesia*, 10 (1970); Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behaviour of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989); Achmad Jainuri, *Muhammadiyah: Gerakan Reformasi Islam di Jawa pada Awal Abah Kedua Puluh* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1981); Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus: Respons Gerakan Muhammadiyah terhadap Penetrasi Misi Kristen di Indonesia*, trans. Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

prayer. In this informal religious circle, the Javanese *ustādh* will not give any lessons as they are very young. Indeed, their job is to be teachers for the children and *imām* during prayers.

This group of *ustādh*s is coordinated under some local '*ulamās* who have graduated from the Middle East. They have regular meetings in one district to evaluate their mission. In this "*Sunnah Connection*," the role of the *Teungku* would not be found. It seems that this system is likely to be the system of caderization that developed in secular campuses during the Islamic revivalism of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>27</sup> At the top of this network, there is an *ustādh* who acts as the '*Grand Ustādh*. He visits this group regularly to give lectures, not only for the *ustādh*s but also for all the members of the group. The *Grand Ustādh* said that he needed to focus on the theological problems ( '*aqīdah*) for the *santri* and the community in order not to be seen as being linked to Jihadist movements. During his visit, he will also evaluate the system of caderization. The *Grand Ustādh* has very close connections with some charitable foundations in the Middle East.

However, a local Acehnese-*ustādh* said that he was concerned whether the Javanese-*ustādh* were giving lessons on *jihad* to the *santri*. This is because on February 2010 there was a sudden attack of a terrorist group in Aceh, near the mountain of Seulawah.<sup>28</sup> One member of the caravan of *ustādh* among the '*Sunnah Connection*' was arrested by the police in this village. He was not an *ustādh*, but very close to the group. Some *ustādh* who have taught *jihad* to students have moved from this village.

There are some possibilities why the local community likes the caravan *ustādh* from Java. Members of the community are keen to have their children able to memorize the al-Qur'an. Some parents want to send their children to special schools in the Middle East or South Asia. There have been some of them were actually sent to the Middle East or South Asia to learn about the al-Qur'an. The arrangements for this are made totally through the connections of the *ustādh*, not the government. Thus, the parents could not understand how their children could make progress in their studies without asking the community of *ustādh*. However, we have heard that not every *santri* was successful with their mission. One *santri* is in Malaysia as an illegal worker, even though at the beginning he had been sent to South Asia.

Next, the community claimed that they are followers of the *Sunnah*, not *madzhab*. They welcomed the caravan of *ustādh* from Java. Besides

<sup>27</sup> See Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk 1987); Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "A Revival in the Study of Islam in Malaysia," *Man*, 18: 2 (1983). See also Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: A Case of Malaysia," *Culture, Identity, and Religion in Southeast Asia*, ed. Alistair D.B. Cook (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "Memahami Isu Terorisme di Aceh," *Serambi Indonesia*, March 1 (2010); Mark Woodward, Ali Amin, and Inayah Rohmaniyah, "Lessons from Aceh Terrorist De-Radicalization," (Arizona: Arizona State University, Consortium for Strategic Communication, 2010).



their voices and during the prayers as *imam*, their performance appears Middle Eastern. Recently, many members wear beards and dress in the Pakistani style. Before their coming many members used *sarung* during prayer time, whereas now they are using the Pakistani style which, according to them, is the *sunnah nabi*. During the preparation of the *dayah* the board of the mosque gave them the hospitality in mosque. Thus, the activity of the mosque is like a real *pesantren*, even though the *ustādh*s are very young. The board asked for the community to donate their funds to support the needs of the *ustādh*.

Furthermore, last year a *dayah* group in North Aceh intended to take over the administration of the mosque. They came to the mosque during the night prayer. One of them became the *imam*. After the prayer he wanted to conduct more *doa* in the *dayah* way. One *Sunnah* member stood up and asked to him to stop because they had never done it that way before and they did not regard it as part of the *Sunnah*. Following this incident the conflict could not be stopped. It took place mainly because the group of *dayah* wanted to open the debate on theological problems within the community, whereas the *sunnah* group said that the mosque was for everyone, but those traditions from the *dayah* could not be brought to this community.<sup>29</sup> Recently, the local people who became involved in the mosque are referred to as *ustādh*, even though they do not have any Islamic studies background.

Kuntowijoyo in his book explains that many Muslims in Indonesia, especially in the urban areas, are ‘Muslims without a mosque.’<sup>30</sup> They learn Islām from the TV, VCD, the radio, and internet, but are unlikely to do *shalāt* in a mosque. They invite *ustādh* to teach their children in their own homes. Indeed, their daily life is controlled by a ‘revolution of the finger’ - meaning they utilize the benefits of ICT in their religious life. By contrast, the situation of the ‘Sunnah Community’ can be referred to as ‘Muslims with a mosque’, where religious problems are solved in the mosque. This system is similar the daily life of the Tablighists in the *markâz*.<sup>31</sup> However, the system of Community is not similar to system of Darul Arqam in Southeast Asia.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See also Martin Sokefeld, “Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology,” *Current Anthropology*, 40: 4 (1999).

<sup>30</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Muslim Tanpa Masjid: Esai-Esai Agama, Budaya, dan Politik dalam Bingkai Strukturalisme Transendental* (Bandung: Mizan, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Bustamam-Ahmad, “From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia,” Ch. II.

<sup>32</sup> On Arqam see Muhammad Syukri Salleh, “An Ethical Approach to Development: The Arqam Philosophy and Achievements,” *Humanomics*, 10: 1 (1994); Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan, “Political Islam in Malaysia: The Rise and Fall of Al Arqam,” *Asian Cultural Studies*, 15: Special Issues (2006); Judith Nagata, “Alternative Model of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia: Neo-Sufism and the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia,” *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 16: 2 (2004); Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, “Islam, Weberism and Economic Development: An Adjunct to Nagata’s Outline of the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia (1968-1994),” *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 16: 2 (2004); Ann Wan Seng, *Rahsia Arqam: Menyingkap ‘Sisi Gelap’ Arqam* (Kuala Lumpur: Millennia, 2005); Ann Wan Seng, *Al-Arqam di Sebalik Tabir* (Selangor: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

In this section we would like to highlight some important points. First, this study shows that in Aceh there have been two titles of religious identity in Islamic education. The title of *teungku* is more likely to be the heritage of traditional Islamic education. However, there is hierarchy of *teungku* which is related to their knowledge and influence in society. The highest position in the *dayah* is the *teungku chik* who owns and runs the system of the learning process. Next is the *teungku bale* who works under direction of *Teungku Chik*. *Teungku rankang* are the senior *santri* who act as assistants to the *teungku bale*. However, there is also a *teungku meunasah* in the village with the chief of the *gampong*, whose job is to give elementary Islamic teaching to children before their study at *dayah* or public school.

The title *ustādh* is more likely to be an “embedded religious title” in Islamic education in Aceh. It can be traced from the establishment of the *pondok modern* in Aceh 1980s. Many *ustādh* arrived in Aceh to work not only in Islamic education, but also in *da’wah* (Islamic missionary work). There has been a conflict between *teungku* and *ustādh* in some sub-districts in Aceh. Some Acehnese say that the coming of *ustādh* has challenged the authority and charisma of the *teungkus*. In the history of the Islamic movement in the Malay world this situation can be seen from the conflict between *kaum muda* and *kaum tua*.<sup>33</sup>

Second, this essay has found that these titles are used not only in Islamic education. The title of *teungku* is utilized by some respected GAM members even though they do not have any background in *dayah*. A GAM member said this title is not part of the identity of *dayah* people, but of the entire Aceh people.<sup>34</sup> In addition, after the signing of the MOU between the GAM and Indonesian government, some *dayah* people have also become involved in the political arena by establishing a political party. They also have mobilized *dayah* people to ensure the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the *teungku* still play an important role in Aceh society.

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<sup>33</sup> Taufik Abdullah, “Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau,” *Indonesia*, 2 (1966); Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesian Project Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 1971); Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1991); Christine Dobbin, “Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 8: 3 (1974); Christine Dobbin, *Gejolak Ekonomi, Kebangkitan Islam, Dan Gerakan Padri*, ed. Fadriah Nurdiansih, trans. Lilian D. Tedjasudhana (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008); Murni Djamal, “The Origin of the Islamic Reform Movement in Minangkabau: Life and Thought of Abdul Karim Amrullah,” *Studia Islamika*, 5: 3 (1998).

<sup>34</sup> In fact there is axiom in Acehnese society: *Aceh Teungku, Melayu Abang, Cina Toke, Kafé Tuan*. A. Hasjmy, “Nafas Islam Dalam Kesusasteraan Aceh,” *Dari Sini Ia Bersemi* (Banda Aceh: Panitia Penyelenggara Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran Tingkat Nasional ke-12, 1981).

<sup>35</sup> Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “The Application of Islamic Law in Indonesia: The Case Study of Aceh,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 1: 1 (2007); Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Islamic Law in Southeast Asia: A Study of Its Application in Aceh and Kelantan* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2009).

As for the *ustādh* group there is a tendency that their arrival in Aceh is not only for the purposes of Islamic teaching but is also part of expanding the terrorist network in Indonesia. In this study we have examined one group of Islamic society in Aceh, where some Javanese-*ustādh*s contribute to religious life. It is also likely to have connections to terrorist networks in Indonesia. Some of it networks do have another mission in Aceh – to conduct *jihad* to establish an Islamic caliphate. In this context, Javanese-*ustādh*s have a very well-organized system in Aceh. They are not only teachers, but are also part of an Islamic hardline movement in Indonesia.<sup>36</sup>

Third, there is a serious problem in Acehnese society in terms of the sustainability of the Islamic traditional system of education. This is because many parents are eager to send their children to *pondok modern*, rather than to *dayah*. Then, they may continue their studies to university level, not only in Aceh, but also in the Middle East. In this situation the role of the *dayah* has decreased in terms of the development of Islamic studies in Aceh. There needs to be more studies to focus on the impact of the *pondok modern* in Acehnese society. This study has only focused on the role of teacher, not the influence of the institution in the society.

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<sup>36</sup> Jamhari, "Mapping Radical Islam in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika*, 10: 3 (2003).

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